

# The image of a healthcare manager today p.I

## (Współczesny obraz menadżera służby zdrowia, cz.I)

Z Kopański<sup>1,2, A, D, E, F</sup>, Y Lishchynskyy<sup>3, B, C</sup>

**Abstract** – The authors discussed the present requirements related to the quality of management in an organisation as well as business success factors. What is more, tasks on respective company management levels were presented. The emphasis is on mental characteristics of managers. Also, the factors verifying actual abilities related to executing rights and responsibilities of a managerial position are discussed.

**Key words** - management quality, business success factors, mental characteristics of managers

**Streszczenie** – Autorzy przedstawili współczesne wymogi dotyczące jakości zarządzania w organizacji, omówili czynniki sukcesu firmy, zwrócili uwagę na zadania na poszczególnych piętrach zarządzania firmą, podkreślili predyspozycje psychiczne menadżerów, omówili również weryfikatory faktycznych umiejętności w zakresie realizowania praw i obowiązków wynikających z zajmowanego stanowiska menedżera.

**Słowa kluczowe** - jakość zarządzania, czynniki sukcesu firmy, predyspozycje psychiczne menadżerów

### Author Affiliations:

1. Collegium Masoviense - College of Health Sciences, Żyrardów
2. Faculty of Health Sciences, Collegium Medicum, Jagiellonian University
3. Danylo Halytsky Lviv National Medical University

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- A. The idea and the planning of the study
- B. Gathering and listing data
- C. The data analysis and interpretation
- D. Writing the article
- E. Critical review of the article
- F. Final approval of the article

### Correspondence to:

Prof. Zbigniew Kopański MD, PhD, Collegium Masoviense - College of Health Sciences, Żyrardów, G. Narutowicza 35 Str., PL-96-300 Żyrardów, Poland, e-mail: [zkopanski@o2.pl](mailto:zkopanski@o2.pl)

## I. CONTEMPORARY MANAGERIAL POSITION - CHARACTERISTICS

Modern day keeps bringing about challenges related to the ongoing globalisation and integration processes that affect international economy. Adjusting to them is synonymous with changes on the management level as well as introducing greater flexibility, innovativeness and above all, dynamism of action.

One of the features characteristic of modern-day business is the observable unanimity of approaching the higher and higher requirements managers are facing. In general terms, the significance of constant professional development of the people at the core of a company is commonly acknowledged. It is exactly the management who are a crucial resource of a modern-day organisation. What is more, competences of managing staff play a crucial part in business development and the implementation of changes in a company. Success of an organisation is to a large extent dependent on its management. Undoubtedly, management is a product of competent managers [1].

According to Claus Moller, “*Nowadays only the companies who can attract the best employees will be successful. In order for the best employees to be willing to stay on, they must like their jobs and feel good in the company*” [2].

Employees are needed to attract customers on the competitive market. Moller enumerates three factors he thinks must be present in order for a company to be successful [2-5]:

- happy and satisfied customers,
- loyal and satisfied employees,
- company income larger than expenses.

Most managers are concentrated on the first factor, sometimes also on the third. However, the second one is very frequently overlooked or ignored. Therefore, managerial competences as well as making use of them developing them are of exceptional significance in modern management.

The success of a company is dependent on the initiative, entrepreneurship and creative involvement of all the

employees. Considering that fact, management becomes more and more of a creative process that supports progress in a given field, employee development, broadening employees' competences and adjustment to objective requirements of a work environment.

This kind of management is visible not only in the selection of the right area to concentrate action, resources and efforts on. It is also about skilful man-management in order to achieve the set goals and successfully direct their energy, contrivance and initiative towards the implementation of tasks that serve the company's and their own success. The task of achieving this kind of success is predominantly on managers' shoulders as they are in charge, and hence, expected to have a certain set of technical, humanistic, conceptual and project-related skills. The managerial profession is surrounded by many myths and misunderstandings. They pertain both to the very concept of a "manager" and the formal education, knowledge, competences and entitlements of a person aspiring to become a manager [6-8].

A manager is a major figure in a modern-day company and the same goes for a company whose business is healthcare. There are various names for the function: a director, chief executive officer, a head etc. A manager has more or fewer responsibilities, depending on the level of the company hierarchy he or she is in charge of. Presently the trend is to refer to an employee in charge as a manager [8,9].

Management studies do not define the very concept of a "manager"; the requirements of the position are not specified, either. "Encyclopaedia of organisation and management" („Encyklopedia organizacji i zarządzania") defines only the concept of "managerism" used with reference to "a system of top management in a capitalist enterprise with the function of a professional manager and the theory and ideology behind it" [6].

"Encyclopaedia of business" („Encyklopedia biznesu") offers a general definition of a manager as a person responsible for managing, i.e. planning, organising, motivating and controlling. According to this source, "a manager is a leader of a team of employees. A manager's role is to get the team to achieve the set goals. The goals are externally imposed or the team participates in working them out" [6].

At the same time, "Business lexicon" („Leksykon biznesu") defines a manager as „a person for an executive position who has versatile knowledge and skills that are essential to manage human resources and organisations in the conditions of uncertainty and changing environment, which are characteristic of such organisations" [6].

In general terms, a manager can be defined as a person whose task is to manage the capital entrusted to him or her (e.g. by the state, shareholders, stockholders, businessmen) as opposed to a businessman who runs the risk of investing his own capital in order to expand it.

Within these broad definitions, three groups of managers and three types of management can be discerned, depending on the range of their competence [7-9]:

- top management, which includes all superordinate positions in the central administration of a corporation and its important branches; an owner manager,
- middle management, which includes the administrative apparatus of the departments and units or branches of a corporation,
- first-line management, supervisory management – it includes the managing staff of production and administrative units, foremen etc.

The supporters of the entrepreneurship concept (*P.T. Drucker, R. Worzel, L. Maul, D. Mayfield*) proposed a different division. They claim that, depending on mental characteristics, managers can be divided into two principal categories: entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs [4].

- Entrepreneur – defined as a businessman who establishes and manages his or her own company, running certain risks and hoping for success.
- Intrapreneur – defined as a person who has abilities needed to run a company and shows a lot of initiative and resourcefulness in an effort develop the company he or she does not own. While intrapreneurs must be ready to take a risk in order to present and implement their ideas, they do not feel a need to have a company of their own

The classification above indicates that with regard to personality traits managers can be divided into those who want to be in charge of companies of their own and those who are employed by someone else. The principles according to which each group operates are essentially the same. Nevertheless, the basic difference is that potential risk and gains are usually less significant for intrapreneurs than for entrepreneurs [7,11].

## II. THE ROLE OF A MANAGER IN AN ORGANISATION

A verifying factor of actual skills related to rights and responsibilities at a given position is the role of a manager. The role is here understood as a relatively stable and internally coherent system of behaviour consistent with more or less clearly defined pattern that is expected of a company's employees and adequate to the position in the structure of the organisation. The way in which a role is implemented defines the actual usefulness of an employee and constitutes a basis for assessing an employee's value for an enterprise. This is reflected by the conversa-

tions of employees, who can evaluate a manager as very good, average or completely unfit for the role. Such varying opinions point to the existence of roles a manager might have despite the fact that the position should require everyone to act in the same way [8,11].

Henry Mintzberg, who in the 1970s conducted a study on American managers with good or very good opinions among their superiors, specified 10 characteristic roles each of the managers studied implemented [11]. The list of those roles and the ways in which they were implemented are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of managerial roles [11]

Role	The essence of the role	Examples
<b>Interpersonal roles</b>		
1. Figurehead	Represents the company as a symbolic leader in the external environment	Representing the company at national and international conferences. Participation in public meetings. Membership in various committees.
2. Leader	Implements the aims of the company by means of motivating the employees adequately	The leader of the group, directing, motivating and assessing employees.
3. Liaison	Involved in maintaining the relationships between the company and the outside (contracts, agreements, commissions) the functioning of the company is dependent on.	Advertising and promoting the company in order to get clients, starting cooperation projects, receiving commissions.
<b>Information roles</b>		
Spokesman	Presents particular company issues to outside parties	Talking to professionals and occupational groups, presenting a specific section of the knowledge on a product, department or company.
Disseminator	Forwards information to the members of the organisation.	Developing and sending reports, periodicals or letters.
Monitor	Seeks information related to the functioning of the company (difficulties connected with sales, taxes and business).	Reading professional magazines related to the company profile, participation in delegations, attending to guests.
<b>Decision-making roles</b>		
Entrepreneur	Works out and initiates new possibilities, introduces systematic changes to the organisation with the emphasis on its development.	Encouraging employees to present their ideas and solutions related to the product and organisation. Initiates research. Encouraging risk calculation.
Disturbance handler	Develops organisational structure. Removes negative phenomena in the company business.	Analysing the organisational structure, especially in the event of a conflict. Analysing the cause of such disturbances and providing a solution that serves the benefit of the company.
Resource Allocator	Distributes tight resources and specifies priorities.	Participating in budget development. Making decisions on the replacements of tools and machinery. Managing human resources (hiring and dismissing employees)
Negotiator	Represents the company in individual and group negotiations.	Helping negotiate union contracts, specifying the conditions of the problems to be solved.

Presently, these roles are being broadened and enriched, requiring more activeness and creativity. Nevertheless, the decision-making roles are still most important ones as the art of making right decisions is the most cru-

cial of managerial competences. A modern-day manager, then, has to acquire the skill of coping with many roles and "acting on multiple stages". The art of business is not only a business game – it is also a psychological game and therefore a right business performance often

requires creativity and even acting. The way a manager handles his or her role is dependent not only on the personality, entitlements and management style in the economy that puts certain standards and behaviour models into practice. An important factor is also the culture of the nation – it can significantly affect the attitude and mentality of a manager. Culture determines the system of paramount values, behaviour (dominance of will, intel-

lect, sensibility, emotionality etc.), social status, tolerance for different views, approach towards tasks etc. Thus, nationality-related characteristics of managers significantly affect their style of managing an organisation – the way they perform executive functions and run a business [2,12,13]. Broader information on this is supplied in the Table 2 below.

Table 2. Characteristics of managers from selected countries [2]

Country	Managers	The status of a manager, ideology, official position, dominant values
USA	Everyone who has executive functions is considered a manager, excluding foremen, on one end of the hierarchy, and top level management (presidents, vice-presidents, heads of committees) on the other	In general terms, managers enjoy respectable status due to their high salaries, the significance of their companies to the country's well-being and the power they have. Managers usually define the company ideology, focusing on private ownership rights and the advantages of market economy. Private ownership is here a basis. The dominant values of the class are: a drive towards success and achievements, believing in hard work, pragmatism, rationality, impersonality in professional relationships, equal opportunities, acceptance towards competition and individualism.
Germany	In German tradition, top and middle managers are considered "Leitende Angestellte" (higher officers) – this category includes vice-presidents and heads of departments.	High prestige of managers as specialists who have a contribution to the country's growing in strength. Great attachment to the idea of free market. The sense of being called for the role and for service. Belief in the inviolability of private ownership. Tendency towards authoritarian style of management.
France	Employees above foremen who perform executive function are considered managers, excluding top-level management; executive staff includes liberal professions in enterprises and other institutions, well-paid sales employees and top technical staff.	Currently a high status based on the model of competence and egalitarianism. Great variety of the ranges of power. Avoiding risks. Great pressure on individualism; hardly any pressure on masculine culture and male dominance. Authority stemming from absolutism and direct omnipotence - facing up to one's opponents.
The UK	Everyone above foremen performing an executive function in a company is considered a manager.	Managers have a relatively low social status. They are subject to the strong impact of class system.. Moderate drive towards avoiding risks. Masculine culture and individualism valued highly. Authority stemming from one's personality rather than one's position. Stability and tendency of authoritarian management style.
Japan	Mainly the heads of organisation units (sections, departments) and their deputies in large companies are considered managers.	High social status and official position accompanied by significant power. The dominant value is groupism (group work), harmony, acceptance of the hierarchy in professional relationships at work, the sense of dutifulness and responsibility towards lower-level employees as well as one superiors.
South Korea	Employees who were recruited as administrative, technical, engineering or research staff in large private companies right after graduation are considered managers; most of them is subsequently promoted to actual executive positions.	The basic values are: harmony, emphasis on hierarchy, collectivism and dependence on one another, belief that human beings are essentially good. Education held in high regard.

Numerous studies confirm the impact of nationality-related features on managers' attitudes, business running abilities (like negotiations skills) and approach to one another. For instance, Harris Research, a British public opinion research institute conducted a survey among

1500 top-level managers from several EU countries (Belgium, France, Spain, Netherlands, Germany and UK), the aim of which was to show their attitude towards each other. The questionnaire indicated that 25% of the respondents considered German partners the easiest to

cooperate with. They were followed by French managers (17%) and British managers. On the other hand, Italian managers were assessed negatively, as 28% of their Western European colleagues considered them the least trustworthy. German managers are held in high regard especially in the Netherlands (61%). Many specialists claim that the assessment of Italian managers is unfair as they have exceptional communication abilities, which is of increasing importance in management.

All in all, the survey showed that managers are different across countries, which stems from cultural differences. Nevertheless, there is one common feature to all managers, namely professionalism. This is undoubtedly a fundamental variable of the managed company's effectiveness [11].

Polish managers have not participated in a study of their cooperation with managers from abroad. However, there are different current studies of their characteristics and skills that allow one to describe them as people who are [12]:

- reluctant to take responsibility,
- slow at decision-making,
- emotional in interpersonal relations,
- inflexible in their actions,
- appreciative of security,
- lacking innovative spirit.

Nevertheless, these deficiencies are counterbalanced by high intelligence levels, creativity, the ability to adapt to new management techniques and methods and the will to broaden one's knowledge in various fields [13-16].

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